

A TORPEDO KING.

The Vast Fortune He Won From a Very Simple But Important Invention.

Strange Freaks of an Explosion Which Literally Annihilated Numerous Unfortunate Men.

Scientists Trying to Account for Its Fearful Action—Rockiness of Noted Torpedo Handlers.

The recent death of Dr. W. B. Roberts, of Titusville, Pa., closes a conspicuous career, says the New York Herald. Roberts was the great "Torpedo King" of the oil country, and, after the Standard Oil people, the best known man connected in any way with the trade. The strange industry which he and his brother built up was peculiar only to the oil regions. His brother, Col. A. E. Roberts, is also dead. For years they enjoyed a close monopoly of the torpedo business and both the brothers made millions of dollars out of it. When their patents expired by limitation the business of exploding torpedoes in oil wells was taken up by whosoever chose to engage in the hazardous undertaking, and now scores of firms are supplying the trade which formerly depended upon "Torpedo Roberts," as the doctor was known.

Roberts was originally a dentist in New York, but coming to the oil country in the early days of the petroleum excitement he and his brother engaged in the oil business and soon secured a monopoly of the exploding nitro-glycerine in the bottom of oil wells to increase the flow. The device was simple, but the device was a valuable invention of the age, and certainly far exceeded the wildest dreams of the young inventor. The device was a tube made of tin to hold the explosive, supplied with a cap for exploding the substance. This was connected by a wire well to the depth of 1,000 feet, if necessary, by means of a cord, and when at the desired depth a small iron rod was inserted, "go-devil" was dropped down on the cord, and this striking the tube containing the nitro-glycerine a terrific explosion followed. These explosions shattered the oil-bearing rock, and the result in nearly every case was an increase in the production of the well. The demand for these torpedoes was enormous. There was anywhere from 15,000 to 25,000 used in the region, and nearly all of them were torpedoes of the Roberts type. The Roberts torpedoes got their own prices, and they were quickly made. In a few years their several fortunes were estimated at from \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000. Every oil producer had to pay tribute to them, and finally the oil men sought to break the monopoly by attacking the validity of the patents. The producers organized to fight the patents in the courts, and long and bitter litigation was the result. The fight went on in every court for years, and finally the supreme court of the United States decided in favor of the Roberts patents, and they were to have the exclusive right to manufacture and use the torpedo for seventeen years—the life of the patent.

The torpedo kings, as they are now called, had scores of agents in all parts of the oil regions, exploding torpedoes in wells for producers. Each torpedo was from ten to two hundred quarts capacity, and the danger of carrying one of these torpedoes was very great. The agents were called "shooters." They carried the nitro-glycerine in wagons drawn by one and often two horses. They often carried as much as five hundred pounds of the deadly stuff, and yet these men would become so reckless that they gave little heed to the manner of their driving.

"Torpedo accidents" were therefore a common occurrence. In dozens of cases man, team and vehicle were blown almost entirely out of existence. It was rarely that a cigar box would hold all of the that could be found. In one case, that of "Doc" Haggerty, no vestige of a human being was ever found and only a few pounds of flesh, identified by the hair, as being all that was left of two horses. This was the strangest case of the many "torpedo explosions" in the oil country. It occurred early in December last, near Pleasantville, seven miles from Titusville. This was after the expiration of the Roberts' patents, and others were engaged in the business. Haggerty was employed by George W. Van Vail in hauling nitro-glycerine with a two-horse team and storing it in a magazine near Pleasantville.

On this occasion the wagon contained fourteen hundred pounds. The explosion occurred at the magazine, probably, when he was in the act of unloading it, and horses, wagon and man were blown to atoms. The force of the explosion made a hole in the ground like an excavation for a cellar, and the two horses were left in almost every part of the country. Thousands of people visited the scene. Search was made for some remains of Haggerty, but nothing was ever found, either of his body or clothing. He was seen on the wagon the night before the explosion. Curious theories were advanced in regard to the utter annihilation of the body. Scientists have said it was not improbable that the explosion had been sufficiently powerful to generate enough heat to reduce the body to atoms instantaneously. Hon. A. B. Richmond, of Meadville, Pa., a man of scientific attainments, held that the theory was plausible. He had not originally advanced the theory, but he thought it might be found to be the true one. It was suggested that Haggerty might have fired a pistol ball into the nitro-glycerine from a safe distance, but no motive could be found for this outside of the fact that he had an insurance of \$5,000 on his life. The insurance company is not entirely sure that he is dead, their chief argument being that no dead Haggerty can be found. Persons familiar with the wonderful annihilative power of nitro-glycerine as witnessed many times in the oil country have no doubt that Haggerty was completely obliterated by the explosion. It is known that the rotary motion of cyclones has generated a sufficient heat to stinge the feathers on chickens, and the force of this explosion must have been many times greater than any cyclone and sufficient, therefore, to have consumed every vestige of the body and clothing of Haggerty.

The numerous cases of spontaneous combustion referred to by Charles Dickens in his preface to "Bleak House" were cited at this time to show that it was possible for a human body to be consumed in this way. Dickens disposes of "Mr. Krook's" spontaneous combustion, and in the preface of the story he justifies himself by citing several well authenticated cases that were known to medical science. One of these cases was that of a German saloon-keeper at Columbus, Ohio. In all these cases, including that of Mr. Krook's, excessive alcoholism was the cause. This did not figure in the case of Haggerty, as he did not use liquor at all. The writer of this was on the ground soon after the explosion, and a talent odor of fire was remarked. This was, perhaps, an hour after the explosion, or as long as was required to drive seven miles in a buggy over a rough country.

Henry France drove a nitro-glycerine wagon in the Kinzua oil district, in the Bradford field, and was finally blown up like most of the "well shooters." Nothing was ever found of France but one knee-cap picked up two hundred feet from the scene of the explosion. George Dolan was carrying two or three cans of nitro-glycerine in a bag through the outskirts of Red Rock, a town in the Bradford field. He fell and the glycerine exploded. The force of the explosion knocked down several houses, and all that

could be found of Dolan was part of one foot weighing less than a pound. He was a man who weighed over 300 pounds. An extraordinary case was that of Charles Berridge, who was killed by an explosion in the Allegheny (N. Y.) oil field. He was standing in a gulch, the sides of which were abrupt and not many feet apart. A nitro-glycerine magazine exploded near him, and less than ten pounds of his flesh could be found. The ground at the time of the explosion was covered with new fallen snow, and although the body was so nearly annihilated that a single drop of blood stained the snow. The body of Berridge, except the ten pounds that were found, disappeared, no one could tell where, as there was no mark on the snow anywhere in the vicinity to give any clue. Berridge was a prominent oil producer and diligent search was made for his remains.

The number of deaths in the oil country from these explosions will probably reach twenty-five or a hundred. Near Scrubgrass, below Oil City, two men were killed in one explosion, and all the remains that could be found were buried in a cigar box. A man on the opposite side of the road was badly injured by the force of this explosion. The men were pumping a well and finding hidden in the woods near the well a can containing what they supposed was kerosene. They put some of it on the engine to lubricate it. The explosion, of course, followed immediately. The men who handle nitro-glycerine are often remarked. France, whose death is noted above, at one time was engaged in hauling nitro-glycerine, and their mode of unloading the wagon was to toss the can over the side of the wagon, and then to land the can. Each one knew that the failure to catch a can meant instant death, but they took the chances. The use of nitro-glycerine has been the means of adding greatly to the petroleum output. The use of this explosive of it is placed at many millions of barrels.

FIVE DOLLARS FOR A TRICK.

How a Clever Bar-Room Trickster Fleeced Philadelphians.

Philadelphia Inquirer: "You see this dollar?" said one of a company of men in front of a rosewood bar in one of the leading hotels in Philadelphia, and he handed a dollar to one of the group, who examined it and passed it around among the company. All decided that there was nothing unusual in its appearance, unless it was counterfeit. "No, it's not counterfeit," said the first speaker, "but I will let you take that dollar and spin it on the bar. I will turn my back, and will tell you whether it turns head or tail."

"Impossible," said one of the doubters, "unless you use a looking glass, and I don't think I'll tell it every time." "Done," said the doubter. The man spun, and his back to the bar, the coin was spun, and as it settled, he called out:

"Heads." It was "heads." "Make it three out of five times for another round," said another of the group. "Certainly," consented the stranger, accommodatingly. Again the coin spun around and "tails" was called. The third time it turned "heads" and a third time it turned "called."

"I can keep it up all night, gentlemen," he said smiling. The drinks were paid for and the stranger, under the genial influence of the liquor and the urgent requests of the company, said:

"I don't often give my tricks away, but I will let you see a trick or two. You see, gentlemen, the coin on the 'head' side is nicked very slightly by a knife, the nicks being about an eighth of an inch apart. The nicks being so small as to be scarcely perceptible. When you spin the coin, if the nicks are on the nick-side, it settles quickly, whereas, on the other side, it slowly settles, taking fully twice as long to 'die' as on the other side. By the difference in sound, you see, I can tell which side turns up, or rather, down. It's all told by sound."

The coin was handed around and spun again, and what the stranger said proved true, much to the delight of the group, who were glad, apparently, as is usually the case, to get hold of a trick which at first seemed inexplicable.

"The trick is a good one," said one of the group, handing out the money, and the other four requested a like favor at the hands of the stranger, who, taking out a penknife, obligingly did as requested. Then, bidding them a polite good-night, he gracefully retired, leaving the group spinning their coins. Suddenly one of them picked up his dollar, examined it and quickly flung it on the bar, the sound given out being the unmistakable dull, dead sound of a counterfeit.

"Done for \$5," said he, he looked ruefully at the door where the stranger had disappeared. "We've learned a trick well worth a dollar," said another, philosophically.

Striking the Struck. The other evening a young man of dissipated appearance "struck" a pedestrian on Michigan avenue for a quarter to pay for lodging and breakfast, but the stricken promptly replied:

"Why, I gave you a quarter last night." "Did you?" "Certainly I did."

"Well, this is a queer town and no mistake. The men all look alike in the evening, or else there are a good many liars around. If you have your photograph about you please give it to me, that I may know you the next time and save trouble."

A Total Failure. "Excuse me, sir," said a fashionable barber to one of his customers, who was in the chair being shaved, "if I was in your place, sir, I wouldn't eat no moah Limburger cheese. It's bad on de digestion."

"I'll not do it again," feebly responded the sufferer. "I only did it this time in hope it would compel you to keep quiet while shaving me, but I perceive that it has failed."—Texas Siftings.

If you could see your own scalp through an ordinary magnifying glass you would be amazed at the amount of dust, dandruff, and dead skin thereon accumulated. The best and most popular preparation for cleansing the scalp is Ayer's Hair Vigor.

Excursion to Washington. On October 1st, 2nd and 3rd the Union Pacific will sell excursion trips to Washington, D. C., at the rate of \$75.00 for the round trip from Helena, Montana. These tickets will be good to reach Washington as late as Oct. 8th and good returning until Nov. 24th. Stop-overs will be allowed at any point west of the Missouri river, returning within final limit. All tickets issued by the Union Pacific will be made good to return to Helena by the Northern Pacific or the Manitoba railways if so desired.

Better get a pair of those men's fine \$6 shoe for \$4 at Gamers'; it's the biggest bargain and deapest cut in shoes ever made in the town.

Through to Chicago Without Change of Cars. The Northern Pacific railroad, in connection with the Wisconsin Central line, is now running Pullman vestibule sleeping cars and free colonist's sleeping cars between Montana points and Chicago, without change. Dining cars are also run on all

through trains. For rates, tickets and other information concerning the only through car line apply to the Northern Pacific office, corner Main and Grand sts., Helena.

A. D. EDGAR, General Agent.

San Francisco and Los Angeles Excursion Rates.

The Union Pacific Railway company will sell excursion tickets to San Francisco and Los Angeles on Sept. 15 and the same date monthly thereafter at the following named rates:

To San Francisco, going via Ogden and return same, \$75.
To San Francisco going via Portland and return same, \$75.

To Los Angeles, going via Ogden and return via Portland, or vice versa, \$90.
To Los Angeles, going via Ogden and Sacramento and return same, \$90.

To Los Angeles going via Ogden and San Francisco and return same, \$90.
To Los Angeles going via Portland and return via Sacramento and Ogden, or vice versa, \$100.

To Los Angeles going via Portland and return same, \$90.
Passengers can have choice of two routes between Portland and San Francisco, either by the way of the all rail, the Mount Shasta route or by steamer.

The above tickets are good going sixty days from date of sale; extreme limit six months; stop-over privileges allowed going or returning at any point within the limit.

The Union Pacific will also sell excursion tickets from Helena to Ogden, Salt Lake City and Garfield Beach, on the 15th of each month at rate of \$30.00 for the round trip; extreme limit sixty days; stop-over privileges allowed going or returning at any point within the limit.

A. E. VEAZIE, Pass. Agent.

HOME TESTIMONY.

HELENA, Oct. 7, 1887. I was suffering from an unusually bad cough, my lungs were sore and congested, and I consulted one of the best physicians in Helena, whose prescriptions failed to relieve me. I became alarmed, and at the suggestion of a friend purchased a bottle of Acker's English Remedy for coughs, and after taking it according to directions was completely cured. I therefore cheerfully recommend it.

JACOB SWITZER. I had a hacking cough and inflamed throat and bought a bottle of Acker's English Remedy upon the recommendation of a friend, and was entirely cured by it. I consider it a never failing remedy for a cough.

J. F. FELDRECH. Acker's English preparations are for sale in Helena only by H. S. Hale & Co.

Harvest Excursion Rates from Missouri River Points to Montana.

The Union Pacific railway company will sell excursion tickets from Council Bluffs, Omaha, St. Joseph, Leavenworth and Kansas City to Montana points on the following dates at one fare for the round trip, \$48.90: Aug. 6 and 20, Sept. 10 and 24, Oct. 8th. Good thirty days. Stop-over privileges will be allowed within limit of ticket.

Through Line Eastward. Via the Union Pacific and Chicago & Alton railroads. Through Pullman sleepers are now run between Cheyenne and Chicago via Denver and Kansas City.

A. E. VEAZIE, Pass. Agent.

For chapped hands, roughness of the skin, pimples or blotches of any kind on the face or other parts of the body, apply Dunder's Specific. It works like magic and is warranted by druggists. Sold by H. S. Hale & Co., wholesale and retail agents, Helena.

Knight Templar's Conclave at Washington. For the above occasion the Northern Pacific railroad will make a rate of \$75.00 for the round trip from Helena to Washington and return.

Tickets on sale Oct. 1st and 2d only; going passage limited to Oct. 8th; extreme limit, Nov. 24th. Stop-overs will be allowed on return trip west of St. Paul within limit of ticket.

CHAS. S. FEE, G. P. & T. A., St. Paul. A. D. EDGAR, Gen. Agent, Helena.

Derangement of the liver covers a multitude of ailments. In all cases where the functions of the liver are interrupted or disturbed, and the bile, its constituent secretion, left circulating in the blood some disorder will follow. Dr. Henley's Dandelion Tonic will restore the liver to its natural duties and promote the secretion of bile, thereby preventing jaundice, dyspepsia, biliousness and other ailments. Sold by H. S. Hale & Co., wholesale and retail agents, Helena.

SYRUP OF FIGS. Combines the juice of the Blue Figs of California, so laxative and nutritious, with the medicinal virtues of plants known to be most beneficial to the human system, forming the ONLY PERFECT REMEDY to act gently yet promptly on the

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PURE BLOOD, REFRESHING SLEEP, HEALTH AND STRENGTH. Naturally follow. Every one is using it and all are delighted with it. Ask your druggist for SYRUP OF FIGS. Manufactured only by the

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HARDWARE, TINWARE, and STOVES. Mine and Mill Supplies.

AGENTS FOR CHARTER OAK AND GARLAND STOVES. SAND COULEE COAL. Does not slack when exposed to the air as most all other soft coal does. A large portion of this coal is similar to Anthracite in character, and does not fill the room with soot. Ask your dealers for the Sand Coulee Coal or apply to S. F. SHANNON, Agt. Office—Montana Central Depot.

An Established Fact is that Prices are Lowest at the

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HEADQUARTERS FOR Lawn Mowers, SPRINKLERS, AND GARDEN HOSE. Mechanical Tools OF EVERY DESCRIPTION. Belting & Packing Iron Pipe and Fittings Cabinet and Builders' Hardware, Nitro-Glycerine, Dynamite, and all High Explosives. 113 NORTH MAIN STREET.

ARTHUR P. CURTIN. Furniture, Carpets, Wall Paper HOUSE FURNISHING GOODS.

Having leased the two upper floors of the Davidson block and connected it with our already famous salerooms, we now occupy four entire floors extending through the whole block from Jackson to Main street, stocked throughout with goods of every grade and at prices that defy comparison. Every purchase made STRICTLY FOR CASH DIRECTLY FROM FIRST HANDS as shipped in CASH LOADS ONLY. An examination of goods and comparison of prices solicited.

Music Department. PIANOS, ORGANS and MUSICAL MERCHANDISE.

U. S. Public Sampling Co. City Office Removed to SECOND NATIONAL BANK. Samples and Assays Made of all Ores. Consignments Solicited. Samples of each lot Submitted to the Different Smelters and the Ore Sold to the Highest Bidder.

WRITE FOR TERMS. Telephone No. 71. Sampling Works at Northern Pacific and Montana Central railroad junction. Take Motor Line West.

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Orders by Mail will receive Prompt Attention. Correspondence solicited. Yard and Factory near N. P. Depot.

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HIDES, SHEEPSELTS, FURS, WOOL, TALLOW. Ginseng and Seneca Root.

SHEEP SELTS & FURS A SPECIALTY. 101, 103 & 105 Second St. North. Shipments Solicited. Write for Circulars.

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Recommended by Miners, Railroad Contractors, and endorsed by the public in general as the Strongest, Safest and Best of all high explosives.

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'SUPERIOR' and Famous 'ACORN' Cooking and Heating Stoves, And W. G. Fisher's Cincinnati Hotel and Family WROUGHT IRON RANGES.

Centennial Refrigerators, Ice Chests, Water Coolers, Ice Cream Freezers, Wood and Willowware, Glass and Queensware, English and American Cutlery, French and American Mirrors, Plumbers' Goods and Supplies, House Furnishing Goods, Etc., Etc.

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WALL PAPER AT COST TO CLOSE OUT. WHITE BLANKS, 10c per roll. GILTS, 15c per roll; former price, 40c. 20c " " " 50c. 25c " " " 75c.

All gilts hung for 15c per roll. J. R. SANFORD. 112 and 114 Broadway.

THE METROPOLITAN, PHILIPSBURG, MONTANA. Formerly SPAREY'S HOTEL. Run on Both American and European Plans. Sample Rooms for Commercial Men. Mrs. T. H. MORSE, Proprietress.

FOR T. Lotta's eye and printing Branch left one of the some \$25.00 now, for H. the resort, a hatched in a much place before it was it her husband's estate for a plan for day. So a ride around more for launch road store in order to take you happy.

A sensible will not on her lot articles she wanted of glass and alum, came in of water may and the Powderd will prevent slightly and eruptions of hol. A few will relieve very trouble. A in water, pose, and whose feet ways recovered soap.

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